

POSTER ABSTRACT

CAMHS Made Simple 2nd edition, a booklet co-produced with young people attending Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Ireland.

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Background: Globally, integrated healthcare services encourage professionals to work with people who draw on their lived experience of healthcare, co-producing improvement together. Health Service Executive integrated care in children's and young people's services are recent priority reform structures in Ireland. This includes single point of access, centralised referrals and partnering with young people as equal, reciprocal partners to improve services.

This person- centred initiative empowered a group of young people attending Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Integrated Healthcare Areas of Dublin North County and Dublin North City and West to co-produce CAMHS Made Simple 2nd edition. This is a booklet about young people's experience of CAMHS, co-designed by young people, CAMHS and key stakeholders. The booklet explains what CAMHS is, who young people will meet, how it can help young people and families, and includes recovery journeys, signposts to further supports and art created by young people.

Approach: From March to April 2024, six young people aged sixteen and seventeen years attended focus groups with a CAMHS working group-two senior speech and language therapists, and one senior social worker. The working group liaised with a speech and language therapy manager and a youth mental health coordinator, who provided access to key stakeholders and funders. The working group used a participatory action research methodology, a collaborative process bringing together action and reflection to deliver practical solutions.

The working group facilitated group discussion by asking young people questions about their experience of CAMHS using collage, and storytelling methods. The young people and working group drafted and co-designed a sixteen-page booklet with a graphic design team and National Adult Literacy Agency. The booklet displayed inclusive images, addressed diversity, and met international plain English guidelines. The National Office for Suicide Prevention, Connecting for Life, Ireland's strategy to reduce suicide, funded this initiative.

Results: This initiative resulted in a co-produced, accessible booklet about young people's experience of CAMHS, to lessen anxiety around attending CAMHS, and promote better

engagement in services. The young people reported that they experienced CAMHS as “very medical” and wanted to share knowledge so that other young people have the confidence to ask the right questions. The working group reported feeling energised when engaging with young people, building agency in young people and themselves to effect improvement together. The young people, and working group will launch the booklet in November 2025, in collaboration with parents, CAMHS, senior mental health management, integrated children’s services forums, and other key stakeholders.

Implications: The working group learned how to promote involvement of young people in the design, and implementation of service improvement using co-production, which aims to make CAMHS more relevant for young people. This process valued knowledge that everyone brings, encouraged a culture of trust and collaboration, and aims to promote further service improvement in partnership with people who use services, with practical implications for healthcare and communities globally. The working group will disseminate this booklet nationally and internationally across sectors through professional networks.